DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 076 EC 124 341

AUTHOR Candler, Ann; Sowell, Virginia
TITLE Mainstreaming Special Educators: Interface between Regular and Special Education.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention of The Council for Exceptional Children (58th, Philadelphia, PA, April, 1980, Session F-42).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cooperative Planning; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Mainstreaming; Teacher Attitudes; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on the enhancement of the interface between regular educators and special educators with particular emphasis on effective mainstreaming of special education students. It is pointed out that for the interface to take place, positive interpersonal relationships, cooperative teaching conditions, and specific strategies and techniques for assisting the student in transition from special education to regular education are necessary. An agenda for conferences between regular and special class teachers is outlined; information regarding cooperative planning, shared classroom procedures, and innovative techniques is discussed; and the importance of student motivation is stressed. (SBH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED187076

F42

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

MAINSTREAMING SPECIAL EDUCATORS: INTERFACE BETWEEN REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ann Candler, Ed.D.
Virginia Sowell, Ph.D.
Texas Tech University
College of Education
Lubbock, Texas

Presented at:

Council for Exceptional Children
National Conference

April, 1980

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Anne C. Candler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 134341

MAINSTREAMING SPECIAL EDUCATORS: INTERFACE BETWEEN REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Despite the widespread interest and effort which has been devoted to the mainstreaming of special education students, problems still exist in this area. One aspect of mainstreaming which has contributed to these problems is the interface between regular educators and special educators. In order for mainstreaming to be most effective, regular educators and special educators must work cooperatively. This need for cooperation is uniquely important in mainstreaming. However, regular educators and special educators have not been prepared for this task.

The focus of this paper will be the enhancement of the interface between regular educators and special educators. In order to accomplish this goal, there must be cooperation between these two groups of educators. Maximizing this cooperation is a complex, multifaceted undertaking. Among the many facets which must be addressed are the development of positive interpersonal relationships, cooperative teaching conditions, and specific strategies and techniques for assisting the student in transition from special education to regular education. Each of these aspects will be considered during this presentation.

The first aspect of the cooperative effort to be discussed is the development of positive interpersonal relationships. This dis-

cussion will include tools for understanding how people differ, strategies for developing rapport, and fine tuning of communication patterns. Emphasis will be placed on the unique problems which may be associated with the development of positive interpersonal relationships in school situations involving both regular educators and special educators and techniques for overcoming them.

The attitude of the regular teacher toward exceptional children is a potent influence in the successful development of student ability in the regular classroom. Research has indicated that attitude can be changed (Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974; Harasymiw & Horne, 1976). The tools for changing attitude include; supply information (Mitchell, 1976; Hasket, 1969), providing contact or experience with special children (Higgs, 1975), modeling of positive attitudes by special teachers which influence regular teacher attitudes (Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974), supportive principal influence (Payne & Murray 1974) and extent and appropriateness of support services provided (Gullotta, 1974).

Teacher can be made aware that those who readily accept differences among students in personality, capability and motivation are good models for their students. If teachers are aware of studies which indicate a positive relationship between self concept and achievement (Meyerowitz, 1962; Smith & Greenberg, 1975) then they will be able to make positive efforts to interact with exceptional students in a manner to enhance feelings of worth.

Higgs (1975) found that a high degree of contact with exceptional children leads to more positive attitudes toward them. Guerin and

Szatlocky (1974) note that the attitudes of special class teachers influence the attitudes of the regular class teachers with whom they have contact. Therefore, it would behoove special class teachers to examine carefully their attitudes toward special students and conscientiously model positive attitudes.

The principal can serve as a change agent to foster acceptance of a wide range of abilities and capabilities. Payne and Murray (1974) have identified the principal as an important change agent in school functioning. The principal's responsibility for organizational matters can provide for communication, and organizational readiness (Harris & Mahar, 1975). Reger (1972) has stated that leaders who understand and appreciate the problem of mainstreaming can positively affect programs in their schools.

Planned experiences to facilitate teaching exceptional children through support services were found to enhance teachers' acceptance of special students (Gullotta, 1974). Gickling and Theobald (1975) found that there was almost unanimous agreement by regular teachers that assistance from special education personnel would be utilized in mainstreaming programs. Cantrel and Cantrell (1976) found that support services in maintaining exceptional children in regular programs resulted in higher achievement scores for both regular and special students.

These tools for changing attitude broaden regular teachers' understanding of pupil differences and lead to strategies for successful teaching. This can maximize successful integration of atypical learners into the regular classroom.

Consultation between regular and special class teachers depends on the rapport developed. Bauer (1975) suggests that successful consultation depends on two main skills. The first of these is the ability of the special teacher to convey information and strategies. The second skill is the ability to act on that information so as to develop clear understanding and rapport based on that rapport. She suggests that there should be a viable contract between the two professionals concerning time, responsibility, tradeoffs, and available services. This "working alliance" provides for an ongoing communication system and meaningful evaluation of the programs.

The importance of communication has been documented extensively. Harris and Mahar (1975) state that lack of organizational readiness is a problem in implementing resource rooms. They suggest that a wise administrator prepares his staff six months to a year prior to implementation. In order to do this commmunication pattern must be utilized. Harris and Mahar state that clear and public delineation of roles between the resource teacher and other specialists be disseminated. They also advocate a concentrated public relations efforts so that all involved can have access to information concerning the proposed changes in mainstreaming students.

The necessity for developing a clear understanding of a newly developed program in the small amount of conference time available is evident. Specific suggestions for optimum use of limited communication time include setting up an agenda, providing for feedback, and training in the use of materials and various instructional

strategies. The agenda will include:

Conference Agenda

Before the Conference

1. Identify the purpose of the conference
2. Collect all available information regarding the topic.
3. Arrange all information in chronological order.
4. Make an outline of all the things you want to remember.

During the Conference

1. Find out how the other parties involved in the conference feel about the student's problem.
2. Accept anything that is said without showing surprise or shock.
3. Provide information about the student's present level of functioning and progress since the last conference.
4. Develop a plan to remediate the problem.
5. Close the conference on a positive note.

After the Conference

1. Put into operation the plan that was developed.
2. Review the conference in a realistic and impartial manner.

Feedback can be incorporated into the communication process through the use of checklists, question and answer sessions, and informal reporting.

Knowledge of psychoeducational diagnosis and management can be used to multiply the professional expertise of the regular teacher. The special teacher should systematically provide technical assistance

during each conference session so that there will be a basis for further interaction.

The second aspect of the cooperative effort which will be considered is the development of facilitative teaching conditions. This discussion will include information regarding cooperative planning, shared classroom procedures and innovative techniques such as peer tutoring and community volunteers. The focus of this aspect of the presentation will be the adaptation of already existing arrangements rather than the development of new arrangements.

Facilitating optimum conditions for learning is a primary function of both the regular and special education teachers. This would include accomodating the needs of special students in relation to the academic content areas provided for through the interface between the two professionals. In language arts special emphasis can be placed on reading in the content areas, vocabulary development, and word attack skills. Within the social sciences consideration must be given to the question of process versus product and techniques and skills for answering this question. Consideration in math must be given to the use of concrete operations versus formal operations and making math manipulative.

Exceptional students may need a more highly structured reading program than is usually provided in the regular classroom. An example of an easily incorporated structure would include provision for selection of reading materials, student involvement in reading and utilization of synthesis-reflective reaction. Special teachers

can provide support for the selection of reading materials through concepts presented, language used, and skills needed by the reader. Student involvement in reading can be organized for additional input, variety of responses, and choice of practice activities. The synthesis-reflective reaction can be facilitated through making panorama writing, reports and summaries, preparing collages, or montages, acting out skits, playing games, and redoing of pretest.

Vocabulary development for the special student needs to be realistic and context-oriented. According to Smith (1978) readers are very sensitive to the predictability of words. He suggests that the feature-analytic model be incorporated into reading instruction. This would indicate that all vocabulary could best be learned within context. Specific ways to develop vocabulary within context would include the following:

1) incorporate new words into already identified sentence patterns,
2) model the use of new words in sentences orally before introducing them graphically,
3) provide for multisensory involvement with words in sentences,
4) incorporate student experiences in "life experience" type stories for increased motivation.

Changing word forms cannot be taught as a word attack skill if generalizability is the ultimate goal, which it should be. According to Smith (1978), learning to read is not a matter of application

of all manner of exercises and drills. Rather it is the provision of opportunities for the learner to generate and test his/her own hypothesis with appropriate feedback. Smith advocates experience in using language as the most efficient way to develop language. Therefore, changing word forms can and should be taught to children with language deficits through experiential processes. For instance, adding plurals, prefixes, and suffixes to words should always be taught within the context of the sentence and the paragraph. Isolated exercises for adding "ing" to words are meaningless. The ability to generalize the rules for changing word forms can only be gained through experience with the language framework which incorporates the various forms of words.

Word attack skills are often taught out of context, as if they were isolated from the rest of the language. For the special child, structuring this relationship is critical. According to Smith, "meaningless drills and exercises ranging from deciding which of three ducks is facing the wrong way to underlining silent letters in words" (p. 184) will not make readers of children. Rather than concern for letters within words, students should be encouraged to get meaning and develop hypothesis from context. When reading in context, letter reversals and substitutions need not necessarily influence comprehension because good readers have had a wealth of experience and many other clues for getting meaning from written material.

In the social sciences consideration must be given to the question

of process versus product and the skills for answering this question. The question of process versus product may be thought of as the so what question. So what is important in each of the areas?

The term process refers to the method of instruction utilized in the teaching/learning process. The processes are basically listening, reading, writing, speaking, and thinking. While most students have some skill in each process area, a deficiency in a given area may interfere with learning if the teaching/learning process is directed primarily at the deficient process. For example, a student who has deficient reading skills may have difficulty in a class that relies heavily on textbook assignments. Therefore, if a student does not learn the way he is taught, he must be taught the way he learns. The question then becomes, what can be done to assist the student in learning? It is important to note that the student's individual process needs will influence testing situations as well as teaching situations. There is a need to modify, adapt, or change the mode of instruction to accommodate the student's individual needs.

The second component of the process versus product question focuses on the product of instruction. The product related question deals with what will be taught/learned. The decision regarding what is to be taught must be determined on the basis of the educational value of the specific material. Further, consideration must be given to the relevance of the material to the student's experiential base and prior knowledge.

The process versus product question is a combination of the two so what questions asked above. The process versus product question focuses on the content to be taught and process for learning it. Often a student who is deficient in reading can learn the information presented in a history course if the learning process which involves the student's deficiency is modified or changed. Modification can be accomplished in any of a number of ways which range from simple to complex. Providing an outline, a study guide, or a set of study questions to assist the student as he/she reads will be sufficient for some students. Teaching the vocabulary of the content area, and providing a glossary of terms are also ways of facilitating the teaching/learning process. Further, providing alternative assignments which require minimal skill in the student's deficient process will facilitate the student's learning. This may include tape recorded readings from the textbook.

Mathematics, because of its highly structured content, is often a problem area for the special student in the regular class. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that many math textbooks are written for students in the Piagetian formal operations stage while exceptional students may still function at the concrete operations level. Therefore, regular teachers can increase instructional effectiveness through the use of modeling and visual examples rather than abstract paper and pencil problems. For instance, many children are unable to preceive differences in measurement. A mere visual

example in a textbook or on the board may not be sufficient to develop needed concepts. Instead, actually employing multisensory instructional alternatives such as actual weighing, measuring, and comparing of items with which the students have regular contact is a viable alternative. The use of games which involve the students in mathematical operations will increase learning through increased participation. This involvement in concrete manipulation provides experiences with number concepts in a tangible manner.

Understanding graphic symbols for mathematical operations can be developed through a systematic problem solving approach. It is necessary that the essential attributes of the content upon which the instruction focuses be delineated. According to Brueckner and Bond (1955) specific procedures for improving problem solving can facilitate the student's getting meaning from mathematical information.

The final aspect of the cooperative effort which will be considered is the development of specific strategies and techniques for assisting the student in transition from special education to regular education.

The use of individual behavioral objectives, diagnostic prescriptive techniques, learning centers, programmed and self instructional materials, and use of peer teachers and tutors have already been incorporated into regular education classrooms. Therefore, the needs of the exceptional student will receive attention within the framework of the heterogeneous classroom. Research indicates that

cooperative learning experiences between students promote academic, social, and interpersonal skill development.

Of primary importance is the motivation of the exceptional student to function adequately in the regular classroom. One motivating factor is involvement with exciting materials such as talking calculators for both math and spelling, electronic visuals, high interest low vocabulary reading materials and community involvement through field trips and local resource people to provide expertise in the regular classroom. Diagnostic prescriptive teaching techniques provide for all student differences; therefore, the atypical is successfully involved in classroom learning activity. Individualized instruction, including criterion referenced pretesting, helped to insure that students are not thrown into a lock step situation in which learning tasks are either too easy or too difficult. According to Hunter (1976), immediate feedback is necessary for further learning. This can be provided to the students through the use of keys for all practice materials, learning centers, peer tutoring, and games. In this manner the student can assimilate new material at his own rate and progress as fast as his abilities warrant. The regular class curriculum can be adapted for the needs of the special learner through the use of media. For instance, cassette taped textbook and study materials can expedite learning for the student whose learning style is different.

In short, interface between regular and special educators can

enhance the learning of the student, provide for the best use of the expertise of both professionals and magnify the opportunities for self realization and a more abundant adult life for students in a world made up of individual differences.

References

Bauer, H. The resource teacher - A teacher consultant. Academic Therapy, 1975, 10 (3), 299-304.

Brueckner L. J. and Band, G. L. The diagnosis and treatment of learning difficulties. New York: Aspleton - Century - Crofts, 1955.

Cantrell, R. P. and Cantrell, M. L. Preventive mainstreaming: Impact of a supportive services program on pupils. Exceptional Children, 1976, 42 (7), 381-386.

Glicking E. E. and Theobald, J. T. Mainstreaming: Affect or effect. The Journal of Special Education, 1975, 9 (3), 317-328.

Guerin, G. R. and Szaltocky, K. Integration programs for the mildly retarded. Exceptional Children, 1974, 41 (3), 173-179.

Gullotta, T. P. Teacher attitudes toward the moderately disturbed child. Exceptional Children, 1974, 41 (1), 4-50.

Harasymiw, S. J. and Horne, M. D. Integration of handicapped children: Its effects on teacher attitudes. Journal of Special Education, 1976, 10 (4), 393-400.

Harris, W. J. and Mahar, C. Problems in implementing resource programs in rural schools. Exceptional Children, 1975, 42 (2), 95-99.

Haskett, Sister M. S. An investigation of the relationship between teacher expectancy and pupil achievement in the special education class. Dissertation Abstracts International, 1969, 29, 4348-4349.

Higgs, R. W. Attitude formation - Contact or information? Exceptional Children, 1975, 41 (7), 496-7.

Hunter, M. Motivation theory for teachers. California: TIP Publications, 1976.

Meyerowitz, J. H. Self-derogation in young retardates and special class placement. Child Development, 1962, 31, 443-551,

Mitchell, M.M. Teacher attitudes. The High School Journal, 1976, 59 (7), 302-312.

Payne, R. and Murray, C. Principal's attitudes toward integration of the handicapped. Exceptional Children, 1974, 41 (2), 132-135.

Reger, R. Resource Rooms: Change Agents or Guardians of the Status Quo? The Journal of Special Education, 1972, 6 (4) 355-359.

Smith, F. Understanding reading: A psycholinguistic analysis of reading and learning to read. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1978.

Smith I. L. and Greenberg, S. Teacher attitudes and the labeling process. Exceptional Children, 1975, 41 (5), 319-324.